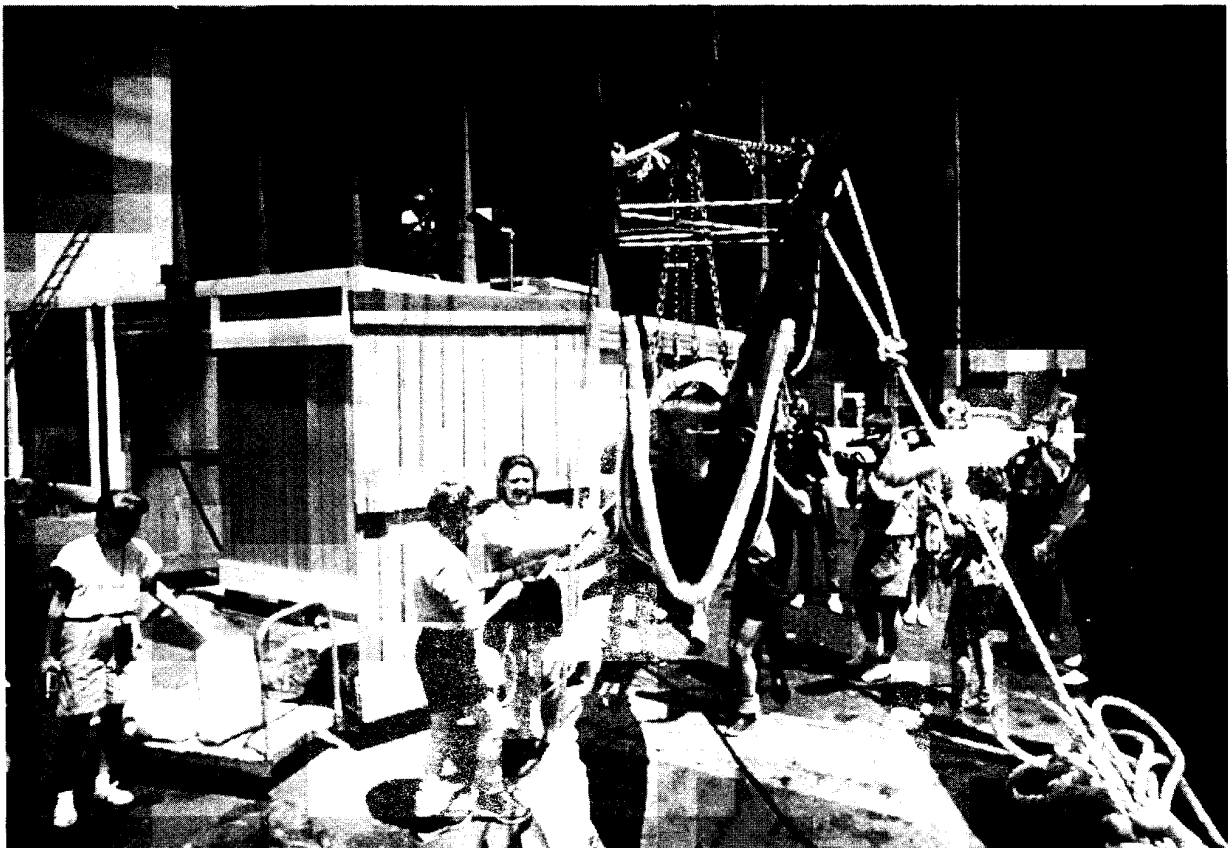


Blackfish Strandings



General Fixed Assets Account Group

The General Fixed Assets Account Group accounts for the land, buildings, improvements, equipment and construction in progress of the governmental funds.



Blackfish strandings on the coast of Cape Cod, are sad to see. Such strandings, however, are not new to the area, as the vintage postcard shows. The whales' behavior has not changed, but human reactions have done a complete 360-degree turn. Yesterday, it meant a boon for local economics. Long before these animals were given protection by federal statute (the Marine Mammals Protection Act of 1972), they were highly prized for the fine grade oil found in their "melons" — the melon-like lump above the snout that once gave the beast its local nickname of "pothead" whale.

Now when the whales mysteriously swim too close to shore scientists and animal lovers flock to the rescue of this environmental tragedy. In November 1884 about 1,500 pilot whales, also known as blackfish, washed ashore in South Wellfleet. Approximately 300 inhabitants made about \$15,000 on the sale of the whale oil. Today a stranding that large would cost the New England Aquarium untold amounts in rescue expenses. In 1986, biologists from the Aquarium were the first to successfully rescue, rehabilitate and release stranded whales. After another mass stranding in 1990 and months of treatment, the Aquarium released two female pilot whales back into the wild.

Text and postcard courtesy of Cape Cod's local historian, Noel Beyle.

Rescue and release photographs courtesy of the New England Aquarium's Marine Animal Rescue Team.